(d) the decisions taken in the ILO convention in this regard; and

(e) to what extent Government have assured that child labour would be eliminated in India within a stipulated time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) India strongly endorsed the need to eliminate unconditionally the worst forms of child labour. It was mentioned that, the Government's strategy of attempting to eliminate this problem is through a sequential process begining with the worst formas and moving progressively towards hazardous & less hazardous forms of child labour. It was also emphasized that, the problem of child labour is closely interlinked with poverty and illiteracy and the Government is addressing both these issues with urgency.

The Government of India has been implementing two schemes for the benefit of children withdrawn from work namely the Scheme of National Child Lbaour Projects (NCLPs) and the Scheme of Grants-in-aid to Voluntary Organisations. At present 100 NCLPs are under implementation in 13 child labour endemic states for the coverage of 2.11 lakh working children. In the Ninth Plan period the total allocation of funds for child labour Schemes was Rs. 249.60 crore. A proposal for an enhanced allocation for the Tenth Plan has been made.

Government is committed to the goal of eradication of child labour in all its forms. Considering the nature and magnitude of the problem, a gradual, sequential approach has been adopted to withdraw and rehabilitate child labour beginning with children working in hazardous occupations.

Retrenchment of workers

1716. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Retrenchment at alarming levels" as reported in the Pioneer dated the 8th June, 2002;

(b) if so, whether the survey conducted by the Labour Bureau has revealed that retrenchment of workers during the last few years have shown an upward trends in comparison to previous years;

(c) if so, the facts thereof; and

(d) whether his Ministry has taken any further steps to check retrenchment of workers, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) to (d) Yes Sir. According to the provisional information available with the Labour Bureau, in the past few years, the Number of workers retrenched has increased from 2503 in 1999 to 3651 in 2001. However, the number of establishements resorting to retrenchement has declined from 176 to 132 over the same period. Safeguards are provided under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 to regulated retrenchment of workers.

The Ministry takes every care to ensure that permission is granted for retrenchment only in genuine cases. For example, since 1999, in 50 per cent of the cases permission has not been granted where applications have been filed by the employers for retrenchment of workers.

Panel for the hire and Fire Policy

1717. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 61 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 18th July, 2002 and State:

(a) whether Government have formed a panel for checks on hire and fire in Labour Policy as reported in the 'Times of India' dated the 11th July, 2002;

(b) if so, the composition thereof; and

(c) by when this panel is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Labour Reforms

†1718. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that international investors and industry are putting pressures on Government to bring a change in the field of labour reforms which could suit their Interests;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.